

THEIR HISTORY AND CULTURE

753

land of their materials than in the latter part of the seventeenth century. Originality may have been sacrificed to mass production. Certainly no revolutionary departure was made from the Ming traditions and there was some continuation of Sung forms. However, toward the latter part of the eighteenth century new colors were introduced and with them came new types of decoration. Many pieces and sets, moreover, were produced for the Occidental trade and often had Western designs. With the decay of the dynasty in the nineteenth century the artistic quality of the porcelain ware declined—as did so much else of China's culture. The rebellions of the middle of the nineteenth century dealt ceramics a blow from which they have never recovered. Ching-te Chen especially was ravaged by the T'ai Pingings and its famous works have never been fully restored. By 1850 means all the porcelain of the Ch'ing period was produced by Ching-te Chen. There were potteries in a number of other places, and in some of them work of excellent quality was done. However, Ching-te Chen was the main center and with its decay ceramics fell to a low level.

This sketch of the history of the work of the Chinese potter has incidentally included several of the main characteristics of the more artistically meritorious portions of Chinese ceramics. It must be added that pottery and porcelain have been employed in enormous quantities and for a great variety of purposes. Utensils in daily use for common purposes have, as in many another land, been of earthenware, and their production has consumed much of the energy of the potter. The prominence of the tiled roof in

Chinese architecture has given work to many thousands of craftsmen. Most of the tiles have been of undecorated baked clay, but those for the more pretentious structures have usually been glazed—at least in recent years—and the highly ornamental ones, some of them with grotesque figures, used to accentuate the more prominent features of the roof, have given opportunity for the craftsman to express himself with originality. The funerary earthenware figures of earlier centuries and especially the porcelains have afforded scope for artistic expression which has often been of a very high order.

The work of the potter, like that of other artists and craftsmen, has its conventions. Folklore, mythology, and religion have